



# California Solar Initiative

*Powering Your Customers' Homes and Businesses with Solar Energy*

## Installer Fact Sheet

The California Solar Initiative (CSI) offers cash incentives for the installation of on-site fixed or tracking photovoltaic (PV) systems. PV installers play an important role in the solar application process and, in most cases, will submit the required paperwork and apply for permits on behalf of residential and business customers who purchase and install PV systems.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The California Solar Initiative is designed to move the state toward a cleaner energy future and help lower the cost of solar systems for California consumers through the installation of 3,000 megawatts (MW) of new, customer-sided solar PV and non-PV projects by 2017.

### ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

All residential, commercial, government, and non-profit electric customers of Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) are eligible to apply for incentives. The CSI program pays incentives for residential solar installations on existing structures, as well as new and existing non-residential structures. New residential construction projects are funded through a different program, the California Energy Commission's (CEC) New Solar Homes Partnership Program.

### INCENTIVE STRUCTURE

The CSI pays two types of incentives to solar customers:

- **Expected performance-based buydown (EPBB)** — For solar projects less than 50 kW, an up-front incentive based on an estimate of the system's future performance is provided. You can calculate the EPBB incentive by entering the system specifications into the online EPBB incentive calculator at [www.csi-epbb.com](http://www.csi-epbb.com).
- **Performance-based incentives (PBI)** — A flat cents-per-kWh monthly payment for all metered output (for the initial five years of operation) from eligible solar systems equal to or greater than 50 kW. Any project size may opt in to receive this type of incentive.

As illustrated in Table 1, incentive levels will be automatically reduced over the duration of the program based on the volume of megawatts of solar reservations issued. Projects are counted toward the megawatts trigger once they are deemed eligible, have paid an application fee

(if applicable), and have received a confirmed reservation. Incentive levels may vary by customer class and Program Administrator\* service territory. Current incentive levels may be viewed online at [www.csi-trigger.com](http://www.csi-trigger.com).

### ELIGIBLE TECHNOLOGIES

PV systems up to 5 MW in capacity are eligible, although incentives are only paid for the first MW of capacity. The CSI offers incentives for PV systems, but other technologies such as non-PV solar thermal may be eligible for incentives if they displace traditional electric usage and meet CSI program requirements. Consult the CSI Handbook to determine eligibility of technologies.

### WARRANTY REQUIREMENTS

All systems must have a minimum 10-year warranty that protects against system or component breakdown. Meters must have a one-year warranty to protect against defective workmanship, system or component breakdown, or degradation in electrical output of more than 15 percent of their originally rated electrical output during the warranty period. For meters that are integrated into the inverter, the meter warranty period must be 10 years.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

All existing residential and commercial customers will be required to have an energy efficiency audit of their existing home or building. Acceptable audit protocols consist of an online or telephone audit provided by the customer's utility. Proof of a completed energy efficiency audit must be submitted to

the utility with the CSI application. Consult the CSI Handbook for further details concerning the energy efficiency audit program requirement.

### INSTALLER / EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER REQUIREMENTS

To participate in the CSI program, eligible companies that **install** system equipment must be listed with the Program Administrator. The Program Administrator will request the following information:

- Business name, address, phone, fax and e-mail address
- Owner or principal contact
- Business license number (if applicable)
- Contractor license number
- Proof of good standing on the records of the California Secretary of State as required for corporate and limited liability entities
- Reseller's license number (if applicable)

This information must be submitted to the Program Administrator before a company can become eligible to install systems under the CSI Program, and must be updated annually. The information must be received by the Program Administrator before the Applicant can receive any reservation confirmation or incentive payment, and must be updated annually by March 31.

Companies that **sell** system equipment must be certified by the CEC and must furnish the same information as listed above to the CEC (on their form NSHP-4). This information must be submitted to the CEC before a company

**Table 1 - EPBB and PBI Payment Amounts by Step**

		EPBB Payments (per watt)			PBI Payments (per kWh)		
MW Step	Statewide MW in Step	Residential	Commercial	Gov't/ Nonprofit	Residential	Commercial	Gov't/ Nonprofit
1	50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	70	\$ 2.50	\$ 2.50	\$ 3.25	\$ 0.39	\$ 0.39	\$ 0.50
3	100	\$ 2.20	\$ 2.20	\$ 2.95	\$ 0.34	\$ 0.34	\$ 0.46
4	130	\$ 1.90	\$ 1.90	\$ 2.65	\$ 0.26	\$ 0.26	\$ 0.37
5	160	\$ 1.55	\$ 1.55	\$ 2.30	\$ 0.22	\$ 0.22	\$ 0.32
6	190	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.85	\$ 0.15	\$ 0.15	\$ 0.26
7	215	\$ 0.65	\$ 0.65	\$ 1.40	\$ 0.09	\$ 0.09	\$ 0.19
8	250	\$ 0.35	\$ 0.35	\$ 1.10	\$ 0.05	\$ 0.05	\$ 0.15
9	285	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.90	\$ 0.03	\$ 0.03	\$ 0.12
10	350	\$ 0.20	\$ 0.20	\$ 0.70	\$ 0.03	\$ 0.03	\$ 0.10

can become eligible to participate in the CSI program and must be updated annually by March 31.

### LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Unless self-installed by the owner, all systems must be installed by appropriately licensed California contractors in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the State of California Contractors State Licensing Board (CSLB). Installation contractors must have an active A, B or C-10 license, or a C-46 license for photovoltaic (PV) systems. Although not required, installation contractors are encouraged to become certified by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP). For additional information on NABCEP, visit [www.nabcep.org](http://www.nabcep.org).

### METERING REQUIREMENTS

The CSI program requires accurate solar production meters for all projects that receive CSI program incentives. Accurate measurement of solar output is of paramount importance to ensure optimum value for both solar owners and ratepayers.

- For systems receiving EPBB incentives, a basic meter with accuracy of  $\pm 5$  percent is required.
- For any system receiving PBI incentives, an interval data meter with accuracy of  $\pm 2$  percent is required.

Performance monitoring and reporting may also be required as specified in the CSI Handbook. The CEC's list of qualifying performance monitoring system providers can be found at [www.energy.ca.gov](http://www.energy.ca.gov).

### NET ENERGY METERING

Incentives can offset up to 100% of onsite electrical load. Net energy metering allows

for the flow of electricity both to and from the customer through a single, bi-directional meter. With net energy metering, during times when the customer's generation exceeds their use, electricity from the customer is sent to the utility, which offsets electricity consumed at another time. In effect, the customer is using billing credits for the excess generation to offset electricity purchased at other times.

### INTERCONNECTION

PV systems must be permanently interconnected to the electrical distribution grid of the utility providing service to the customer. Portable systems are not eligible. The system interconnection must comply with applicable electrical codes and utility interconnection requirements. Consult the CSI Handbook for further details concerning interconnection, including insurance requirements. Proof of interconnection and parallel operation is required prior to receiving an incentive payment.

### INCENTIVE APPLICATION PROCESS

A CSI Statewide Database has been created to streamline the application process and eliminate the need to manually complete the incentive application paperwork. While the application is being completed online, the forms can be printed and submitted along with other documentation required to complete the application process. The CSI Statewide Database allows installers to manage all of their projects from a single source while obtaining 'real-time' status updates on individual solar projects. Contact the applicable Program Administrator or visit [www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov](http://www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov).

The CSI application fee is 1 percent of the unadjusted requested CSI program incentive amount. Application fees are rounded to the nearest dollar amount. However, application

fees are not required for residential projects or systems that are smaller than 10 kW.

After the customer selects the solar installer and chooses either the EPBB or PBI payment option, the installer submits a reservation request application via the CSI Statewide Database, along with a hard copy of the application and all required incentive claim documentation. The incentive claim documentation includes, but is not limited to, all application forms, proof of utility service, worksheets, energy efficiency audit documentation, interconnection agreement, executed purchase agreements, and proof of project milestones, including the fulfillment of all inspection requirements (if required) as described in the CSI Handbook. Once this documentation is received, and the system passes inspection, the Program Administrator will issue the incentive payment.

### TRAINING

CSI Program Administrators hold monthly training classes to explain the application process, shading methodology, the online application database, and other program information. See each Program Administrator's website to find the next training opportunity.

### RESOURCES

- To obtain a copy of the CSI Program Handbook or to receive further CSI program details, visit [www.GoSolarCalifornia.ca.gov](http://www.GoSolarCalifornia.ca.gov).
- The EPBB Calculator can be found at [www.csi-epbb.com](http://www.csi-epbb.com) to assist you with a preliminary evaluation of a site's potential for solar.
- To view a list of participating installers, visit the CEC website at [www.consumerenergycenter.org/erprebate/database/fulllist.php](http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/erprebate/database/fulllist.php).
- For information about the CEC's New Solar Homes Partnership Program, visit [www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/nshp/](http://www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/nshp/).

## \*PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

#### California Center for Sustainable Energy

Attn: CSI Program Manager  
8690 Balboa Avenue, Ste. 100  
San Diego, CA 92123  
Email: [gosolar@energycenter.org](mailto:gosolar@energycenter.org)  
Phone: 858-244-1177 (866)-SDENERGY  
Fax: 858-244-1178  
Website: [www.gosolar.energycenter.org](http://www.gosolar.energycenter.org)

#### Pacific Gas & Electric Company

Attn: California Solar Initiative  
P.O. Box 7265  
San Francisco, CA 94120-7265  
Email: [solar@pge.com](mailto:solar@pge.com)  
Residential Customers: 800-933-9555  
Solar Hotline: 415-973-3480  
Website: [www.pge.com/solar](http://www.pge.com/solar)

#### Southern California Edison

Attn: California Solar Initiative  
Program Administrator  
6042A North Irwindale Ave.  
Irwindale, CA 91702  
Email: [CSIGroup@sce.com](mailto:CSIGroup@sce.com)  
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866-584-7436 (Program Administration)  
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